

# Patch High School joins fight against childhood obesity

Story and photo by Mildred Green

**P**atch High School physical education students are learning about eating healthy and staying fit through a combined effort from PHS, Stuttgart's Wellness Center and the Patch Fitness Center.

This joint venture began to help the local youth fight obesity, said Carol Heffernan, PHS gym teacher.

"Obesity is one battle we will try to win," she added.

PHS students enrolled in this year's physical education classes have learned a variety of topics, such as basic nutrition, how to monitor their heart rate during exercise and how to put together individualized fitness programs, among others.

In addition, PHS has added an elective class, Conditioning, for students who choose to continue with their progress.

## A new opportunity

Only after completing the required physical education class (Personal Fitness and Lifetime Sports) can a student take Conditioning.

The conditioning class – which meets at the Patch Fitness Center – gives students the opportunity to work out two to three times a week (depending on the block schedule).

During each class, students are required to perform cardio and strength exercises.

Everyone works at their own pace to complete 30 minutes of cardio exercise. However, athletes in season must complete 20 minutes of cardio.

For the remainder of the class time, students work on improving their strength by using weights, incorporating the proper lifting techniques they are taught in class.

Sophomore Bryan Horsley said he has seen improvements in his strength and also in his energy level. He believes that by having the class in the morning, he has more energy throughout the entire day.

*Learning what resources are available to them helps students know how they can continue to stay fit or improve fitness throughout their lives.*

**Carol Heffernan**  
Patch High School

"I feel more awake in the mornings after working out," Horsley said. "After PE I am 100 percent ready for school."

The conditioning class offers students the opportunity to set their own goals and design individualized fitness programs to help them reach those goals.

Students are required to record their daily workouts and keep track of their progress in a notebook.

Heffernan, who teaches Conditioning, believes that by keeping a notebook students are prone to be motivated because they are able to actually see their achievements.

This is helping one student in particular see his achievements.

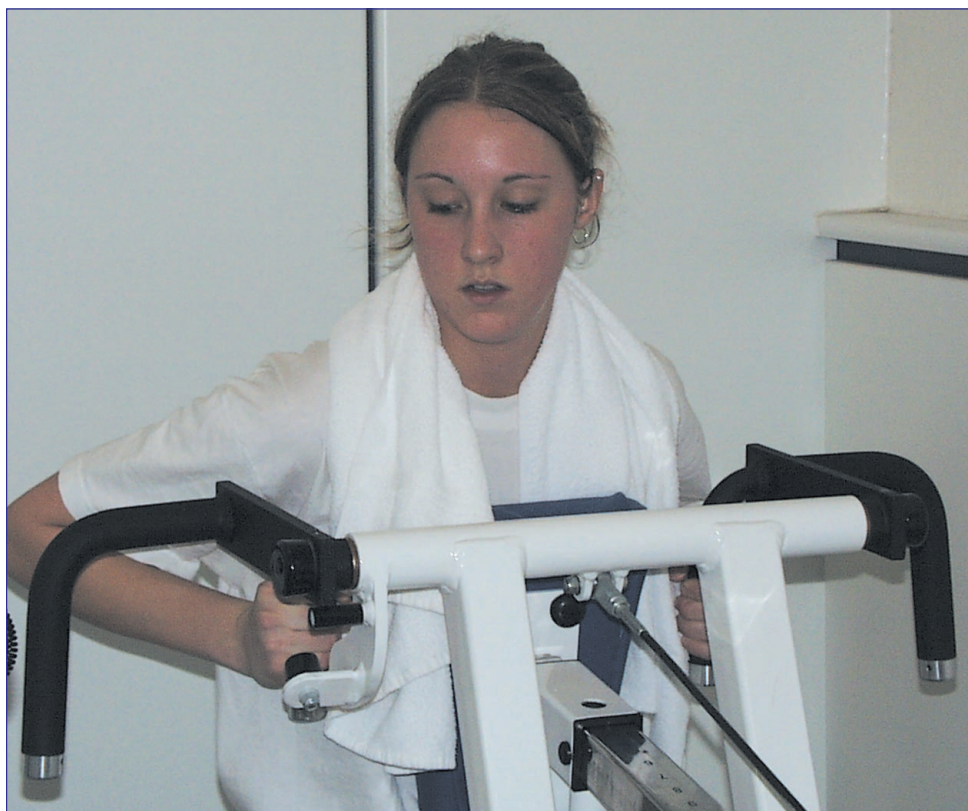
"The changes I've seen in my strength, physical appearance and even my asthma, have made my self-esteem higher," said PHS junior Adam Dickensheet.

## Community support

Heffernan said her classes have received considerable support from PHS Principal Steve Provinsal and others in the community.

"The staff at the Patch Fitness Center has been incredible," Heffernan said.

She explained that 6th ASG Fitness Coordinator Corey Doubek has worked with stu-



**Patch High School Senior Jennifer Crowley works out during her conditioning class at the Patch Fitness Center. PHS has partnered with the fitness center to offer this new elective class for students who want to continue the progress they began in their traditional physical education class.**

dents in the conditioning class on skills such as plyometric drills, which help with agility and power.

Additionally, Michelle Saylor, 6th ASG health promotion coordinator at the Stuttgart Wellness Center, has lectured to both of the physical education courses.

Part of her lecture included giving students fitness assessment tests designed to show them how to calculate their personal fitness levels.

She has also taught students how to measure and test their strength, flexibility, cardio-

vascular endurance and body composition.

In addition, Saylor covered topics like understanding food labels, portion control and the importance of maintaining fitness at any age.

Heffernan believes that the availability of the facilities and personnel is making a significant difference in the attitudes and fitness levels of a group of her students.

"Learning what resources are available to them helps students know how they can continue to stay fit or improve fitness throughout their lives," she added.

## Expert advice: Start young to ensure lifelong dental health

**By Dr. Harvey Lum**  
Stuttgart Dental Clinic

**T**he way children care for their bodies today will have an impact on their health far into the new millennium.

The good news for parents is that preventive dental care has dramatically improved the oral health of American children.

It is now possible for many children to reach adulthood without ever experiencing tooth decay.

February is National Children's Dental Health Month and the Stuttgart Dental clinic has these tips for parents and caregivers:

- Take your child to see the dentist regularly.
- Put only water in a child's naptime or bedtime bottle.
- Start brushing as soon as the child's first tooth appears.
- Begin flossing when two teeth begin to touch.
- Brush and floss your child's teeth until they can be taught to do this alone.
- Make certain your child gets the right fluo-

For a wide range of dental health information online, visit the American Dental Association's Web site:

**www.ada.org**

ride needed for decay resistant teeth.

- Ask your dentist about sealants.
- Good oral health practices should begin in infancy and continue throughout adult life.
- In your child's early years, you must provide this care.
- Later you will need to instruct, monitor and motivate your child to help maintain good oral health habits.

Attitudes and habits established at an early age are critical in maintaining good oral health throughout life.

For more information call the Stuttgart Dental Clinic at 430-8626/civ. 0711-680-8626.



**The Stuttgart Dental Clinic's Dr. Harvey Lum speaks to a group of area students about the importance of good dental hygiene.**